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LETTER DATED 28 JANUARY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT
OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from my Government, I wish to transmit herewith a statement issued by the Ministry of External Relations of the Republic of the Sudan concerning the situation of civilian Sudanese captured by the Forces of the Tigray Government of Ethiopia and the suffering to which these innocent civilians were subjected. The savage attacks of the Tigrian forces resulted in the kidnapping of any Sudanese citizens who are now considered missing. The Tigrian forces has also taken back into the Ethiopian territory a large number of children and women as hostages. There is confirmed information and substantial evidence that these children and women are subjected to inhumane treatment including rape, torture and abuse.

I would like to request you to bring the contents of this letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council so that the appropriate measures to terminate the suffering of the Sudanese people by returning them back to their families are taken.

I also request that this letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Elfatih ERWA
Permanent Representative



Annex

[Original: Arabic]

Statement concerning the tragic plight of missing persons,
detainees and prisoners with the Ethiopian Tigray forces
attacking Sudanese territory

Since Ethiopian Tigray forces launched a criminal act of aggression against its eastern borders on 12 January 1997, the Sudan has been monitoring with deep concern the situation of large numbers of missing citizens of various ages. There are 3,000 to 4,000 of them, mostly women and school-age children.

The information available to the Sudanese authorities is that these citizens are in a cruel and appalling situation as a result of intimidation and coercion by Ethiopian Tigray forces in the area. They are also suffering from hunger, thirst and sickness through being forced to travel long distances on foot. Since the attack on the Sudan's eastern borders was launched, invading Ethiopian Tigray forces have been holding large numbers of citizens and preventing them from leaving the town of Kurmuk. These innocent people are being treated cruelly and savagely by the attacking forces.

In another development, eye-witness reports from citizens arriving at the town of Damazin in the southern part of Blue Nile province indicate that invading Ethiopian Tigray forces have captured 160 schoolchildren and 15 teachers. They also captured Mr. Ya'qub Husayn, governor of Kurmuk, whose ultimate fate remains unknown. In the meantime, the information that has reached the Sudanese authorities confirms that, more than a week after they were captured, Mr. Isma'il Mahmud, Secretary of the National Congress Secretariat, and Mr. Al-Rabi' Ahmad Karmano, head of the Kurmuk local council, were killed by the savage Ethiopian Tigray forces.

The Government of the Sudan presents these facts as confirmation that the attacking Ethiopian Tigray forces have clearly and blatantly violated the principles of international law and the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War in ways that have included the abduction of women and the rape and abuse of the women and children they have taken into Ethiopian territory. Given this appalling situation, we urge the international community, as represented by its specialized organizations and institutions and first and foremost by the Security Council, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the States signatories to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, to discharge their humanitarian responsibilities and obligations by condemning these most heinous violations committed by the criminal Ethiopian Tigray forces against the civilians and soldiers who have fallen victim to the brutal aggression launched on our eastern borders. We further call upon the international community and all its relevant institutions to meet their responsibility to halt these violations forthwith, to ensure the necessary protection for all missing persons, detainees and prisoners and to put an end to practices involving violence and threat of violence that have the basic purpose of spreading terror among the innocent civilian inhabitants of the

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area and uprooting them. The Sudan urges the institutions entrusted with ensuring respect for international humanitarian law to institute an inquiry into the savage crimes committed by the Ethiopian Tigray forces against the innocent Sudanese prisoners and detainees in their possession, which have included physical liquidation, so that the perpetrators and war criminals implicated in these practices will not escape the justice of the law.
